

Hi Dan,  
I'm really glad you got that stuff out of the songs. Here's what the guy wrote:

(from Philadelphia Inquirer, Sun., Jan, 5, 1997)

For years Philadelphia's own Peter Stone Brown, the singer/songwriter and sometime rock critic, has presented himself as another of the many acolytes worshipping at the Bob Dylan altar. Having studied the great early records, Brown is not hesitant to cadge a phrase from the bard when it suits his sprawling, sometimes grandiose narratives. His characters occasionally run through places such as the "valley of death," only to then say something inane like "Gotta remember to stop and catch my breath."

Though the backing band is cool and plenty confident, the first thing you notice about Up Against It, Brown's debut recording, is the way he emulates Dylan's herniated singing: Even the songs with clear, pronounced melody lines (the resigned "Here On Earth," the hardworking title track) feel garbled, as though Brown is afraid to take off the Dylan mask long enough to discover the joys--and problems--of his natural voice.

The delivery is sometimes stiff and the lyrics feel stilted. (Sample from "Before I Go": "Will the days be bleak and fallow?") As a result, it can be hard to tell whether Brown is being overweeningly earnest or doing some kind of (bleak? fallow?) parody.

--Tom Moon

Isn't that amazing? It blew my mind that you wrote what you wrote in that e-mail, because I was almost gonna write this fuck and something along the lines of "when you've been in the valley of the shadow of death, perhaps then you'll find out what you say when you get there."

Sure, I'd love to read your books particularly the ones on poetry. Obviously, I'm still a big Dylan fan with an ever-growing collection (how many versions of All Along the Watchtower can one man have?). Have you heard the Supper Club stuff from '93? Amazing! I saw one of the shows--it was at a club in NYC--all acoustic. Also have you heard the other Basement Tapes boots that came out over the past 10 years or so. Also amazing. I've now seen Bob 50 times. He played a real small theater (800 capacity) right near here a couple of years ago for 2 nights, and then in '95 did 3 nights at this bigger club (Electric Factory) with Patti Smith.

Other than that, I'm glad you caught the spirituality of the songs on the album. Certain songs are tied together from some very heavy-duty stuff I went through at the beginning of this decade. The record company changed the order of the songs (my one concession). The original order if you have a programable CD player and want to check it out was Matter, You're Not There, Earth, Mystery Mt. Up, Insignificant, Walking, Rockabilly, Door, Say Yes, Before I Go and Waiting For You. When I made the order, it was in one long marathon recording and mixing session that ran about 28 hours with a small break for dinner. I was still thinking record album in my mind, so side 2 would've begun with Walking In My Sleep.

My record company is very small and not able to do enough. The music business is all about BIG phone bills and waiting to hear from people. I've been waiting to hear from people for many years now. I financed the album myself and it took a very determined year to shop it, but I succeeded. The whole thing is a one-step forward, 2 steps back process. But little victories like the review in On The Tracks make it worth it. I'm managing and booking myself, working mostly as a solo, so it's very hard. But as one good friend, a great disc jockey here in town who played me on the air for years before I made this album said when I played it for him when I got back from Texas, "This is what you do."

I'm very happy with the album. It was the sound I heard in my head for my songs. Can't wait to make another one, but don't know when that'll happen. Would love to do it with the same producer. As I told you on the phone, he could read my mind. He's a true artist, it was amazing watching him mix it.

I really need to get the hell out of Philly (as you can tell from the above review).